

RANDOM NOTES ON THE DISTRIBUTION OF SOME
COLORADO BIRDS, WITH ADDITIONS TO THE
STATE AVIFAUNA.BY HORACE G. SMITH.¹

SINCE the publication of Prof. W. W. Cooke's 'Birds of Colorado' some additional information has been obtained relative to the distribution and breeding habits of some species whose range at that time was but little known, so far as the State of Colorado was concerned.

Through connection with the State Historical and Natural History Society, the writer has had opportunities, both to collect and examine a number of specimens from various localities within the State, and presumes the following notes will be of interest to bird students at this time. Unless otherwise stated, the specimens referred to were donated to the museum by the persons whose names appear in connection with the information given. Others were taken by Curator William C. Ferril and the writer, while on short collecting trips, and in this connection it may be well to state that usually but one to three days were spent in any one locality. Had time been available for more continuous and thorough work, additional facts would doubtless have been secured. My thanks are due Prof. Robert Ridgway of the National Museum, also to members of the staff of the Biological Survey, who kindly examined some of the more difficult subspecies.

Harelda hyemalis. OLD-SQUAW.—Three more specimens, now in the State collection, may be recorded for the State. One was shot at Loveland, Colo., Oct. 16, 1898; another at Calkins Lake, near Longmont, Oct. 23, of the same year. Both were probably males and were taken by Mr. Bryan Haywood. A later specimen, a male, was secured by Judge Park, at Longmont, about Nov. 20, 1903.

Oidemia deglandi. WHITE-WINGED SCOTER.—A male was taken at La Salle, Weld Co., Oct. 24, 1904, and presented to the museum by Mr. H. G. Clark.

Oidemia perspicillata. SURF SCOTER.—Two specimens, both males,

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were donated to the museum, one having been taken by Mr. L. B. Meek, at Barr, Adams Co., Oct. 22, 1899; the other secured at Loveland, Larimer Co., by Mr. H. A. Fynn, Oct. 31, 1899.

Nycticorax nycticorax nævius. BLACK-CROWNED NIGHT HERON.— Early in January, 1903, Mr. T. L. Monson brought in a young male of this species, which he shot from a tree near Fort Lupton, Weld Co., some time between December 20 and 24, 1902. Mr. L. J. Hersey, who has had much experience with this species at Barr Lake, Colo., has no fall records later than October, except in case of crippled birds. In preparing this specimen the writer made special search for casualties of this kind, but found none. Though the bird had not moulted, it was fat and in good condition. The stomach was empty.

Strix pratricula. BARN OWL.— Two more captures for the State may be recorded, both being females. The first was shot from the balcony of the State House, by Patrick Boyle, head janitor of the building, March 29, 1907, and presented to the State Historical Society. A short time previously Mr. Boyle called my attention to some "pellets" which were scattered about the upper balconies. Explanation of their tell-tale presence, supplemented by suggestions to be on the watch for the owl, resulted in its capture. The second specimen was shot by the writer at Holly, Prowers Co., May 24, 1907. It was startled from its roosting place in thick brush on the Arkansas River. The stomach contained the remains of a small rodent.

Otus asio maxwelliæ. ROCKY MOUNTAIN SCREECH OWL.— In 1905, while stopping with the family of Mr. H. D. Boyes on Dry Willow Creek, Yuma Co., we learned that a small eared owl had reared a brood of young in a hole in the perpendicular bank of the creek, about half a mile from the farm house. Accordingly on our trip in 1906 we made special search in hopes of securing specimens which would decide the question as to the variety to be found here. On June 9, a male was secured while roosting under the upturned roots of a large fallen cottonwood tree. The latter was examined by both Mr. H. C. Oberholser and Prof. W. W. Cooke, the latter writing me that it is quite typical of the above subspecies.

Dryobates villosus villosus. HAIRY WOODPECKER.— On June 9, 1906, the writer took a pair of this species near Boyes's Ranch, Dry Willow Creek, Yuma Co., which, so far as we know, are the first records for the State. The actions of the birds, as well as the state of plumage, bore evidence that they were nesting in the neighborhood, but as it was then growing late, search for the nest on that day was impossible. The writer intended to return later and make thorough search, but unfortunately had to leave the locality before doing so. At least one other specimen was afterward seen, about half a mile from the first locality. The skins were sent to the Biological Survey for verification, and were so marked by Mr. Oberholser, who, Prof. Cooke informs me, pronounced them, "nearer the eastern than the Rocky Mountain bird."

Myiarchus cinerascens. ASH-THROATED FLYCATCHER.— A young male

was taken by the writer at Pagosa Junction, Archuleta Co., August 8, 1904. The plumage would indicate that it was probably reared in the neighborhood, but further search was impossible, owing to my leaving the place soon afterward.

Pica pica hudsonica. BLACK-BILLED MAGPIE.—Col. N. S. Goss, in his 'Birds of Kansas,' records this species as "an occasional fall and winter visitant in western Kansas." We have records from several points near the eastern State line of Colorado, Mr. Ferril, Curator of this society, having seen three at Julesburg, Sedgwick Co., Feb. 22, 1907, and later on Sept. 19, saw two in company with Blue Jays. Mr. H. D. Boyes tells me a pair was occasionally seen the past winter, near his ranch on Dry Willow Creek, south of Wray, Yuma Co. This is its first appearance according to his experience during a residence of about 20 years at that place. The writer several times saw half a dozen or more at Holly, Prowers Co., while collecting there the last week in December, 1907, and the remains of others have previously been seen in the brush heaps of wood rats at this locality.

Cyanocitta cristata. BLUE JAY.—Some additional knowledge of this species has been gained since the records from Yuma Co., given in 'The Auk' (Vol. XXII, p. 81, 82). The writer has taken other specimens at Wray, and has since found it much more common at Dry Willow Creek, southeast of that place, where specimens were also taken. Several nests were seen in the tall cottonwoods surrounding the home of Mr. H. D. Boyes, and as a matter of fact, half a dozen nests to the mile, usually covered by incubating birds, could be seen up and down the creek, the first week in June, 1905.

Two sets of eggs were taken June 4, 1905. One nest about seven feet from the ground in a dead black willow, overgrown with grape vines, contained five slightly incubated eggs; the other about 25 feet up in a cottonwood tree, held four eggs in which incubation had progressed about one fourth. The birds were flushed in both instances. Mr. Boyes informs me that the species was not uncommon about the ranch the past winter.

It is also found in other eastern counties of the State, Mr. Ferril having shot two from a flock of half a dozen at Julesburg, Sept. 19, 1907. He was also told that it bred there. In the southeastern portion of the State, it is apparently less common. The writer saw one southwest of Holly, Colo., in the forenoon of May 24, 1907. In the afternoon of the same day a female was shot about a mile from the same locality near town, possibly the same bird.

Dolichonyx oryzivorus. BOBOLINK.—We have a male, taken in Middle Park, near the Troublesome River, by the late Prof. A. M. Collett, on July 11, 1897.

Icterus spurius. ORCHARD ORIOLE.—May 28 to June 9, inclusive, 1905, the writer made collections in Yuma County. June 3-9 were spent at Boyes's ranch on Dry Willow Creek, some ten or twelve miles southeast of Wray. Among the surprises met with in this region was the Orchard Oriole, which was found to be quite common and apparently breeding.

The males were seen daily, and heard in full song, in every grove; the females were less often noticed, possibly on account of their less conspicuous plumage, or because incubating.

A female was seen carrying nesting material, but as she flew quite a distance the location of the nest was not discovered. Several males and one female were taken. June 5-15, 1906, again found the writer in the county, part of the time being spent with Mr. Boyes. The experiences of the preceding year were repeated with additional information on nesting, several nests being discovered among the topmost branches of the trees, where they were quite inaccessible. Further specimens were also taken. Although Curator Ferril and the writer have spent considerable time in the vicinity of Wray, during the migrations, the species was only met with in the locality mentioned.

Icterus galbula. BALTIMORE ORIOLE.— In the same locality and under similar conditions, this species was also found by the writer, two males having been taken near Boyes's ranch, June 4 and 5 respectively, 1905. Females were also seen but not secured. In 1906 several pairs were seen, and a few hours watching was rewarded by the discovery of a nest, containing five recently hatched young and one egg, which, together with the female parent were taken June 14, 1906, and are now in the State collection. The male was seen at the nest but escaped capture. Our experience would indicate that the species was a not uncommon resident on Dry Willow Creek, Yuma Co., during the years 1905 and 1906, and in all probability may be found there every summer.

I may add that Bullock's Oriole is common there also, which fact made it quite difficult to estimate the relative abundance of the two species, the more so as they usually kept in the higher branches of the taller cottonwood trees, which were kept in motion by a stiff breeze that prevailed most of the time during my stay there. This I believe is the first authentic breeding record for Colorado.

Coccothraustes vespertinus montanus. WESTERN EVENING GROSBEAK.— As the breeding range of this species in Colorado is not yet well defined, it may be well to mention a brood of four or five, just out of the nest, that were seen by Howard S. Reed, July 22, 1898, in "California Park, Elk Head Mountains, Routt Co., Colo." One of the family was taken, and is now in Mr. Reed's collection.

Zonotrichia querula. HARRIS'S SPARROW.— A female, shot by W. C. Ferril, October 9, 1907, about two miles east of Kit Carson, Cheyenne Co., along the line of the Union Pacific Railway track. It was in company with a small party of Western Tree Sparrows, Western Vesper Sparrows, etc., and the only one seen. They were near a culvert and probably attracted by a patch of rank weed vegetation, which had grown up at that point.

Junco hyemalis oregonus. OREGON JUNCO.— A specimen of this variety was taken by the writer on the Platte River near Denver, Oct. 16, 1885, and subsequently sent to Prof. Robt. Ridgway, who verified the

identification. Later (after the habitat of this subspecies was restricted to the Pacific Coast), the specimen was shown to Prof. W. W. Cooke, who probably thinking it would, at that time, be referred to *connectens*, made no mention of it in his 'Birds of Colorado'. This disposal of it did not satisfy the writer, however, who quite recently again sent it to the National Museum, at the same time calling attention to the restriction in habitat which had taken place since the original examination. In due time the specimen was returned still bearing the above cognomen.

Junco montanus. MONTANA JUNCO.—In a large series of Colorado Juncos, we find a number that are evidently referable to this species. A few of these were selected and sent to Prof. Robt. Ridgway for further examination, and specimens from the following localities were identified by him as this species. These are a pair taken by the writer on the Platte River near Denver, Dec. 3, 1885, and March 23, 1892, respectively. Two females taken on Clear Creek, near Denver, by Curator Ferril, April 2, 1901, and a male taken at Ralston Creek, Jefferson Co., by Ralph Smith, Feb. 22, 1895. We believe it is quite common at these localities, both as a migrant and winter resident.

Pipilo fuscus mesoleucus. CAÑON TOWHEE.—In a small collection of birds made by Howard S. Reed, the writer had the pleasure of examining a specimen of this subspecies, shot near Boulder, Colo., March 17, 1895. So far as I know this is the most northern record of the variety in Colorado; other recorded captures having come from the Arkansas Valley in Pueblo County. In this connection it might be well to mention the taking of several specimens by Curator Ferril at Las Animas, Bent Co., on April 27, 1907, which would seem to extend its range somewhat to the eastward. In 1906 the writer also took two males at Watervale, Las Animas Co., Aug. 7 and 8, respectively, and saw several others while there.

Guiraca cærulea lazula. WESTERN BLUE GROSBEAK.—Since recording this bird at Wray (Auk, Jan. 1905, p. 82), we have found it to be a not uncommon summer resident in eastern Yuma Co. The writer came upon a young brood not yet able to fly, near Boyes's ranch, Dry Willow Creek, June 5, 1905. The parents were feeding them at the time. The species was not uncommon, both here and in the vicinity of Wray. The dates of a number of specimens taken from 1904 to 1906, inclusive, vary from May 21 to June 15.

Cyanospiza cyanea. INDIGO BIRD.—A female was taken by Curator Will C. Ferril, at Hugo, Lincoln Co., Colo., June 9, 1906, and is now in the Historical Society's collection.

Spiza americana. DICKCISSEL.—Not uncommon summer resident at Wray, Yuma Co., where my attention was first called to them by Mr. W. E. Wolfe, who kindly drove me out to a certain field where they were apparently breeding.

One male was taken June 2, 1905, and two others on June 15, 1906. Their songs are not uncommon in the fields in the vicinity of town, where they doubtless nest; in fact, the writer marked several areas in which nests

were presumed to be located, but owing to stress of other matters, time was not taken to search carefully for them. The females were not often seen and were doubtless incubating. Also heard in the fields near Boyes's ranch some ten or twelve miles south of Wray.

Piranga erythromelas. SCARLET TANAGER.—An adult male was taken by Mr. W. C. Ferril at Palmer Lake, Colo., May 17, 1902, and was mounted by the writer. A second specimen, also an adult male, was taken at Pueblo, Colo., May 20, 1904, by Mr. B. G. Voight, who kindly donated it to the State Museum.

Vireo olivaceus. RED-EYED VIREO.—Two additional captures of this species may be given, the first a male, taken by Mr. L. C. Bragg at Boulder, Colo., May 30, 1904, and afterward kindly donated to the society. The second, also a male, was taken by Mr. W. C. Ferril at Wray, Yuma Co., May 26, 1906.

Lanivireo solitarius cassini. CASSIN VIREO.—This species was first definitely recorded for Colorado in the 'Nidologist,' Vol. III, p. 76, a female having been taken by myself at Aurora, near Denver, May 13, 1888. This, however, was not the first specimen taken by the writer, as a recent examination of the vireos in my collection, now the property of the State Historical Society, disclosed two others which, being fall specimens and in obscure plumage, were previously overlooked. The first, a male, was taken on the Platte River near Denver, Sept. 16, 1884; the other (sex?) Sept. 9, 1887, near Creswell, Jefferson Co., Colo. Both were recently identified by Mr. H. C. Oberholser.

Vireo bellii. BELL'S VIREO.—Since the records of specimens given in 'The Auk' (Jan., 1905, p. 82), taken near Wray, Yuma Co., in 1904, the writer has had further experience with this species, having again found it common, locally, around Wray in 1905 and 1906, specimens being taken as late as June 15 in the latter year. Also common on Dry Willow Creek, in the southeastern part of the county, where two males were taken June 9 and 11 respectively.

August 31, 1905, a family was seen at Julesburg, Sedgwick Co., one of which was taken. From May 22 to 25, 1907, they were quite common at Holly, Prowers Co., where the writer took a male on the 22d and a female the following day. The species was in full song and one of the most characteristic vocalists of the willow thickets.

Vireo vicinior. GRAY VIREO.—May 16 to 27, inclusive, 1907, the writer made collections in the Arkansas Valley between Manzanola, Otero Co., and Holly, near the State line in Prowers Co. May 16 to 20, inclusive, was spent at Lamar, at which place four specimens of this southern species were taken, which prove to be the first records for the State. The first male was taken May 16, one female on the 18th, and the other two, a pair, on the 20th. All were shot within a few yards of the same spot — used as a general dump ground — in a small grove on the Arkansas River north of town. Possibly the greater abundance of insects in this locality was the attraction for them. Special search at the other places visited, namely:

Holly, Prowers Co.; Prower, Bent Co.; La Junta and Manzanola, Otero Co.; but no other specimens were seen. Prof. W. W. Cooke writes me that, "The nearest previous record is in New Mexico, not far from Las Vegas." Specimens were examined by members of the Biological Survey.

Mniotilta varia. BLACK AND WHITE WARBLER.—One seen by the writer at Holly, Prowers Co., Colo., May 23, 1907. Observed for a few moments, but a few yards away, climbing about on the trunk of a cottonwood in the manner peculiar to the species, and under circumstances which preclude the possibility of misidentification.

Helminthophila peregrina. TENNESSEE WARBLER.—It was common during my stay at Holly, Prowers Co., from May 22 to 25 inclusive, 1907, at which time several were often seen together in company with other warblers. Two males were taken May 22 and 23 respectively. A day spent at Manzanola, Otero Co. (May 27), revealed several specimens, a male being taken. About the same time Mr. Ferril, while collecting at Julesburg, Sedgwick Co., took a male, May 21, and saw several others. Later, on the 27th, he took specimens at Kit Carson, Cheyenne Co., where it was not uncommon, being associated with Black-poll Warblers. From the above it would appear that the species was well represented during the spring migration of 1907, over the whole of eastern Colorado.

Compothlypis americana ramalinæ. WESTERN PARULA WARBLER.—The writer took a female, May, 1904, on Clear Creek, near Denver, Colo., just over the line in Jefferson Co. Another specimen, also a female, was taken by W. C. Ferril from a flock of about a dozen, at Kit Carson, Cheyenne Co., Colo., May 27, 1907. Both were later examined by Mr. H. C. Oberholser of the Biological Survey.

Dendroica cærulescens. BLACK-THROATED BLUE WARBLER.—Sept. 18, 1903, saw a beautiful male, from the second floor of the hotel in Wray, Yuma Co. The bird was in a cottonwood tree opposite the window and about 10 feet from the writer.

Dendroica coronata. MYRTLE WARBLER.—One shot by the writer at Holly, Dec. 31, 1907. So far as we know this is the first winter record for Colorado. The bird was in the underbrush near the Arkansas River and entirely alone.

Dendroica maculosa. MAGNOLIA WARBLER.—A male taken at Holly, Prowers Co., May 22, 1907, is now in the Historical Society collection.

Thryomanes bewickii leucogaster. BAIRD'S WREN.—A female was taken by the writer May 23, 1907, at Holly, Prowers County. This is apparently the most eastern record for the State.

Poliotilta cærulea obscura. WESTERN GNATCATCHER.—Three males of this subspecies, which are apparently the first records for Colorado, were taken by Mr. W. C. Ferril at Grand Junction, Mesa Co., May 17, 1906. Mr. Ferril's attention was first called to them by hearing unfamiliar call notes, which upon investigation proved to come from this species, which he soon found was not uncommon in the shrubbery near the confluence of the Gunnison and Grand Rivers. Many specimens were seen during the

day, both singly or in small parties of three or four, associated with warblers and other species common in the locality. Specimens were examined by members of the Biological Survey.

Sialia sialis. BLUEBIRD.—The experience of Curator Ferril and the writer would indicate that the Bluebird is not uncommon in eastern Colorado, from the northern boundary of the State to as far south at least as the Arkansas River. It was observed by Mr. Ferril at Julesburg, Sedgwick Co., May 21, 1907; it also has been seen by Mr. W. E. Wolfe and the writer at Wray, Yuma Co., in May. Mr. Ferril took two males and saw one other at Kit Carson, Cheyenne Co., May 26, 1907. The writer found it breeding at Holly, Prowers Co., May 22, and took a pair at Prowers, Bent Co., May 25, 1907. The writer observed it at Denver years ago and there is a female in the collection taken by the Curator at Arvada, Jefferson Co., May 27, 1902.

A PRELIMINARY LIST OF THE BIRDS OF SHANNON AND CARTER COUNTIES, MISSOURI.

BY E. SEYMOUR WOODRUFF.

THE following list of birds is the result of daily observations by the writer, made for the most part in the early morning hours, during a three months' stay in the Ozark Mountains of Shannon and Carter Counties, Missouri, from March 7 to June 8, 1907.

This interesting section of southern Missouri has hitherto been almost completely neglected by ornithologists. It accordingly is deemed advisable to publish a list of the birds observed during this visit, notwithstanding its brevity and the limited opportunity available to me for field work, especially in view of the several interesting records made there. A few of the more interesting 'finds' were recorded by the writer in 'The Auk,' Vol. XXIV, pp. 348, 349, July, 1907, and reference to a number of others is made in Mr. Otto Widmann's excellent work on the birds of Missouri, which has recently appeared.¹

Because of my short stay and the consequently restricted area

¹A Preliminary Catalog of the Birds of Missouri, by Otto Widmann. Trans. Acad. Sci. of St. Louis, Vol. XVII, No. 1, pp. 1-288. Issued Nov. 16, 1907.